To walk together: intergenerational learning and transformative leadership

Brandon P. Hollingshead, Peter Blaze Corcoran and Joseph Paul Weakland

Those of us who have been privileged to receive education, skills, and experiences and even power must be role models for the next generation of leadership.

– From Wangari Maathai’s Nobel Lecture, delivered in Oslo, Norway, 10 December 2004

As institutions of government grapple – often unequally – with challenges they face, the efforts of a small, dedicated group of leaders, working objectively and without any vested personal interest in the outcome, can help resolve what often seem like intractable problems.

– From Nelson Mandela’s speech at the launch of ‘The Elders’ in Johannesburg, South Africa, 18 July 2007

Before the sun rises over Africa, women have set out to walk for water, unemployed youth have set out walking in search of labor, and children have set out on a walk for school. The daily search for life, livelihood, and learning has begun. While the African context may make particular demands in terms of alleviating poverty, overcoming corruption, and developing sustainability, the challenges are global. The need for transformative leadership and collaboration across generations is universal.

This book began in Africa. Seeing Nelson Mandela in 2002 at the World Conference on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, one could glimpse the transformation of African leadership. Great hope was created by a powerful leader stepping down after one term, by the Mandela Constitution, by the commitments to human rights, youth development, environmental protection, and expanding educational opportunities. Hearing Wangari Maathai in 2009 at a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) symposium on climate change and sustainable development in Nairobi, Kenya, one could sense her charismatic leadership, her wisdom, and her integrated vision of peace. She taught us that we cannot have peace without democracy and nonviolence, that we cannot have democracy and nonviolence without social and economic justice, and that we cannot have social and economic justice without healing Earth.
Inspired by the leadership legacies of Nelson Mandela and Wangari Maathai, this book began with a concern for the next generation of environmental leadership and the responsibility of higher education in creating transformative leadership. Who would they be – those who could alleviate poverty and create sustainable employment for the vast youth population who lack prospects of right livelihood? Who would their mentors be? Where would they come from? From which universities? Which academic centers would prepare them with the necessary knowledge and research? What could we pass on, those of us who have worked in the field of environmental education these several decades since the founding of the field? What kinds of learning will emerge? What are the experiences, research areas, and skills that are sufficient to create transformative leaders in environmental education and sustainability education? Why are education systems, and even NGOs, so fundamentally conservative in their approach to learning and leadership?

Beginning with such questions, and building on Wangari Maathai’s work in establishing the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies at the University of Nairobi, as well as Akpezki Obguigwe’s work in creating the Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability in African Universities (MESA) project at UNEP, we began a modest project. In 2011, we formed an international, intergenerational, informal network of university scholarly centers in sustainability and environmental education. We believed that the research network could be a creative and innovative space to strengthen the task of mainstreaming sustainability in higher education. At a time of increasing challenges and complexity, we saw this network as an outlet to research, document, and share the rich contributions that academic centers make in the advancement of education for sustainable development in higher education.

One purpose of the proposed network is to document and report how individual centers operate at the leading edge of sustainability – to showcase how centers practice sustainability in their home institutions and communities. We believed that centers could be an innovation space for the university and community. This network of centers would, therefore, investigate the role academic centers play in mainstreaming sustainability in institutions of higher education.

After convening a small group of diverse centers in June 2013 at the World Environmental Education Congress 7 in Marrakech, Morocco, the group decided that creating this book would be the right action to launch the International Intergenerational Network of Centers (IINC). Given our concern for intergenerational collaboration and our sense that transformative leadership was needed in higher education, we drafted a book concept paper and invited each center to submit a chapter for editorial consideration.
We also invited other education scholars to submit chapters. This was done seeking a balance of generations, geographies, and genders. We asked authors to speak to both learning and leadership – in the context of sustainability. Our directive was to explore the role of intergenerational learning and transformative leadership in helping environmental education and education for sustainable development to evolve to meet the critical needs of society and of natural and cultural systems. We raised three questions for critical consideration:

1. If safeguarding the continued viability of people, organisms, and natural processes is the central ethical challenge of our time, what role might intergenerational learning and transformative leadership play within education for sustainability?
2. What are the methodologies, curricula, and tools necessary for advancing and strengthening education for intergenerational sustainability learning and leadership?
3. What are the roles of centers, networks, and innovative programs in mainstreaming sustainability in universities and communities?

We were heartened by the response to the call for chapters and uplifted by the growing interest in intergenerationality and sustainability in education. None of this would have been possible without the support of the Dutch government agency, the Dutch Program for Education for Sustainable Development. We agreed with Roel van Raaij that this volume would be an appropriate end to the book series we have created for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014. The integrated themes of intergenerational learning and transformative leadership for sustainable futures in this book allow us to look forward to the post-2015 era with hope.

**Intergenerational learning**

When we announced this book and called for chapter authors to speak to intergenerational learning, we asked for contributions connected to demographic shifts between old and young, the reality of profound intergenerational fragmentation, facilitating intergenerational learning, cultural perspectives on intergenerationality, and young people and social movements. We purposefully did not attempt to define our understanding of intergenerational learning. Rather, we invited chapter authors to speak to the individual philosophies that

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guided their work. Many chapters in this volume describe educational programs and projects that extend across generational lines and that appear in localized contexts. In this introduction, we consider the ways sustainable development policy has considered notions of intergenerationality and point to the educational possibilities of intergenerational learning.

Intergenerational sustainable development policy

Generational and intergenerational concern is a hallmark of sustainability discourse. Just as providing safety and opportunities for youth and honoring elders are shared cross-cultural values, so too is consideration for present and future generations a common rhetorical device in most major international sustainable development declarations. For example, the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment calls to ‘defend and improve the human environment for present and future generations’ (1972). This language is clearly echoed in the report of the Brundtland Commission and its famous definition of sustainable development as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987). Indeed, the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 (UNCED 1992), Johannesburg Declaration (UN 2002) and the Rio+20 statement on ‘The Future We Want’ (UN 2012) all declare an ethical imperative to consider present and future generations.

As compelling and as prevalent as the notion of ‘present and future generations’ is in sustainable development discourse, there is little precise language on the meaning, methods, and goals of intergenerationality. Most often, the concept of intergenerational thinking and the term ‘intergenerational’ are used to support the inclusion of children and youth in sustainable development initiatives. The outcome document of Rio+20 provides a concise example of the ways in which intergenerational thinking manifests itself within sustainable development policy and discourse:

We stress the importance of the active participation of young people in decision-making processes, as the issues we are addressing have a deep impact on present and future generations and as the contribution of children and youth is vital to the achievement of sustainable development. We also recognize the need to promote intergenerational dialogue and solidarity by recognizing their views. (‘The Future We Want,’ 2012, article 50)

This statement expresses common features of intergenerational thinking across many declarations: (1) consideration of present and future generations; (2)
honoring the participation and contributions of children and youth; and (3) intergenerational dialogue and solidarity. This volume explores the position and contributions of children and youth in Chapter 1 by Heila Lotz-Sisitka in terms of hope and possibility for the future, in Chapter 15 by Sylvia van Dijk Kocherthaler and Jaime Hoogesteger van Dijk in terms of the active participation of children transforming communities and environments in Mexico, and in Chapter 16 by Ingrid Schudel in terms of developing relational perspectives between educators, children, families, and communities.

At the same time, however, ‘The Future We Want’ encapsulates a common interpretation of intergenerationality, one that disproportionately focuses on children and youth as a protected class and often ignores or marginalizes elders. For example, the Rio+20 outcome document only mentions elders in two instances, both in relation to the elderly as vulnerable and disabled. Likewise, Agenda 21 describes the role of the elderly in sustainable development through language on resource demands and dependency burdens, health needs, and disability. In only a single instance does Agenda 21 promote intergenerational dialogue with older generations, as compared to numerous exhortations on the importance and role of youth.

Outside of the realm of international sustainable development policy, the Earth Charter (2000) identifies several broad ethical commitments in the context of generational and intergenerational concerns. The Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental values for building a just, peaceful, and sustainable world. In the context of intergenerational concern, its principles speak to the use of resources, fulfillment of needs, and transmission of values within and across present and future generations. Further, it names youth as a protected class and articulates specific commitments to ‘honor and support the young people of our communities’ especially through ‘educational opportunities that empower [children and youth] to contribute actively to sustainable development’ The Earth Charter also contains language on intergenerational equity, environmental justice, and transmission of non-Western, traditional, and indigenous knowledge.

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2 See ‘The Future We Want’ Articles 43 and 135.
3 See Agenda 21 section 5.22.
4 See Agenda 21 section 6.18.
5 See Agenda 21 section 6.34.
6 See Agenda 21 section 7.4.
7 See Earth Charter Principle 4, ‘Secure Earth’s bounty and beauty for present and future generations’; Principle 4.a, ‘Recognize that the freedom of action of each generation is qualified by the needs of future generations’ and Principle 4.b, ‘Transmit to future generations values, traditions, and institutions that support the long-term flourishing of Earth’s human and ecological communities.’
As progressive and as inclusive as the broad language of the Earth Charter is, it too does not specifically identify elders and older generations as stakeholders in sustainability.

The sustainable development movement is invested in meeting the needs of present and future generations and has several broad and specific declarations to take up the project of intergenerational dialogue and collaboration. Yet it is clear that the articulation of intergenerational concerns is not balanced in the current state of sustainable declarations; these discussions often privilege the contributions of rising generations over the 'burdens' of aging generations. We do not mean to say these declarations and policy statements have intentionally excluded non-youth generations. However, the absence of specific, positive, and inclusive language that considers the role and wisdom of elder generations is clearly a gap in current thinking on sustainability policy.

**Moving in the direction of intergenerational justice**

Intergenerational relations have been most fully considered in the areas of intergenerational justice and intergenerational equity, where future generations are considered not as the generation of rising youth, but as ‘potential persons’ (Barry 1977, 1999, Parfit 1982, Rawls 1971, 2001). On present generations, Rolston writes, ‘Our notions of justice have been finely honed around the concept of individual rights as these can be defended against the interests of others’ (1989, p. 62). But, he continues, ‘When we move beyond our grandchildren, we falter; for future persons are indeterminate and remote, and one wonders how present persons have duties to such faceless nonentities’ (ibid, p.62). Living generations clearly have rights, but what of non-living future generations?

A key tenet of intergenerational justice is the precautionary approach, where ‘present generations may be obligated by considerations of justice not to pursue policies that create benefits for themselves but impose costs on those who will live in the future’ (Meyer, 2010). Another is that future generations have no agency; there is an asymmetrical relationship between the choices made by present generations and the effects felt by future generations: ‘we act as we do because we can get away with it: future generations do not vote, they have no political or financial power; they cannot challenge our decisions’ (Our Common Future, World Commission on Environment and Development 1987, A/42/427, annex, para. 25). Intergenerational justice, in general and within the sustainable development movement in particular, has grappled with the philosophical and moral responsibilities owed to future generations. How are we to act when the environmental and social impact of present choices may not immediately be felt, such as in the case of climate change and economic destabilization?
From intergenerational justice to intergenerational learning

In a groundbreaking report (United Nations General Assembly 2013) on ‘Intergenerational solidarity and the needs of future generations’ and in response to input given by several nations and stakeholders to the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon proposed the establishment of a high commissioner for future generations to sit on equal standing as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Such a commissioner would be an advocate for intergenerational solidarity, undertake research and policy development to enhance intergenerational solidarity, and advise United Nations Member States and affiliated UN entities on matters of intergenerational concern. Primary to this undertaking is recognition of the key role of education for sustainable development. The report states:

Education is itself critical to intergenerational solidarity, as the means of transmitting accumulated or at least latest scientific and other knowledge to future generations. Concern for future generations rests on an open and critical engagement with moral and ethical choices, carried out by informed stakeholders, at all levels. Possible actions would involve strengthening civic education, education for sustainable development and leadership training to foster attitude changes advancing intergenerational solidarity and justice. In this context, the importance comes to the fore of promoting education for sustainable development.... (UN 2012, Article 27)

If environmental education and education for sustainable development are primary in advancing intergenerational solidarity, how might we define intergenerational learning in education? Despite significant commitments to children and youth in environmental education and education for sustainable development, there is little research on intergenerational learning. Indeed, Duvall and Zint (2007) show that researchers in environmental education have explored intergenerational learning strategies in only a small number of cases. This is an important and emerging area of inquiry in EE and ESD – and one that is not clearly defined. We agree that ‘intergenerational learning could arise in any range of contexts in which young people and elderly people come together in a shared activity’ and ‘take place within programs specifically designed to bring together young people and older people in shared meaningful activities’ (Newman and Hatton-Yeo 2008, p. 32-33). Along these lines, intergenerational learning in education for sustainable development might entail (adapted from Brown and Ohsako 2003 and Newman and Hatton-Yeo 2008):
Different generations and different age groups learning together about each other, including experiences, values, and aspirations for sustainable futures.

Different generations and different age groups learning together about ecological, social, cultural, and economic events relevant to them.

Different generations and different age groups learning through shared experiences and training activities designed to develop academic knowledge and skills for addressing the challenges of sustainability.

One of our goals in collecting chapters for this volume was to highlight cases where adult and elder generations actively collaborated with younger generations in reciprocal and mutually beneficial dialogue, education, and action. Examples include Chapter 10 by Kirsten Maclean, in which Australian Aboriginal elders and youngers share traditional values of country through modern technological methodologies, Chapter 24 by Maria Roca and Andrew Stansell, in which students and faculty members form mentorships and partnerships to achieve sustainability projects, and Chapter 17 by Bram Vingerling and Erik Thijs Wedershoven, where leaders from across Dutch society, industry, and politics partner with students and youth in the WorldConnectors programme. These programs point in the direction of intergenerational solidarity and mutually enhancing relationships across different generations.

**Transformative leadership**

We understand transformative leadership for sustainability to refer to leadership processes which reflect upon and reconfigure the dominant cultural systems, institutions, and narratives which perpetuate unsustainability. Accordingly, we do not consider ‘leadership’ to be valuable in and of itself; indeed, there is no shortage of effective leadership for maintaining unsustainable institutions and ways of being. Instead, as Clugston and Calder explain through the concept of ‘strong sustainability’ within their contribution to this volume, transformative leadership for sustainable futures requires changing how we live at all scales – personal, familial, communal, regional, national, and global.

Our understanding of transformative leadership for sustainable futures is also informed by international sustainability and sustainable development declarations, including Agenda 21 (UNCED 1993), the Earth Charter (2000), and the recent outcome statement of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, ‘The Future We Want’ (UN 2012). Further, while there is an emerging global consensus concerning the need for sustainable alternatives to our unsustainable ways of life, as well as a consensus concerning the specific values that should underwrite such alternatives, transformative leadership works less toward achieving a predetermined vision, and functions more as an emergent,
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adaptive process that unfolds differently across various spaces and temporalities. In other words, transformative leadership for sustainability always manifests itself within a particular context, employs local knowledge, and respects local needs and customs.

Leadership and intergenerationality

We are interested in leadership because of its close relationship to the concept of agency: both leadership and agency pertain to how people acquire the ability to change their circumstances for sustainability. Many contributors to this volume explore how environmental educators might help create the necessary conditions for individuals to understand their socio-ecological situation and take action. Transformative leadership for sustainability emerges when those who have acquired agency work with others to enact sustainability within a particular context. Here intergenerational learning becomes particularly important. Intergenerational learning and transformative leadership intersect when different generations share their knowledge and resources in order to help one another achieve the perspective and means necessary to enact sustainability. Typically, when we think of ‘intergenerational leadership,’ we might think of older, wiser leaders who impart knowledge to young people. While this is often the case, previous volumes in the Wageningen Academic Publishers series for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development have examined how young people might also participate as leaders (see for example Corcoran and Osano 2009).

Intergenerational leadership, then, is not only about the old guiding the young, or vice versa, but about helping less advantaged generations – such the young and unemployed, or elders who have become isolated – through creating conditions, providing resources, opening spaces, and shaping institutions so as to allow the young and old to make their contribution to enacting sustainability within a shared socio-ecological context. This is not only an ethical necessity, but a practical one, as well; the wealth of perspectives and resources provided by intergenerational leadership and collaboration can better enable us to respond to complex sustainability challenges.

As we contemplate transformative leadership, it is also necessary to hold in mind ‘leadership’ as a social, cultural, and historical construction. The qualities we often value within leaders – as well as to whom we look for leadership, including whom we allow to lead or consent to be led by – bear the mark of unequal relations of power and dominant cultural narratives. As such, individuals and groups of people are often simply denied the ability to lead, or must overcome social and cultural obstacles in order to be perceived and function as viable leaders. For example, to see evidence of this, we need look no further than the recent presidential elections.
in our own country of the United States, where many debated whether Hilary Clinton (a white woman) or Barack Obama (a black man) could lead effectively or whether voters would accept a leader who was not a white man. This example highlights the role that gender and race play within American attitudes and expectations about leaders. The efforts of Wangari Maathai and Nelson Mandela are all the more compelling, then, as these leaders necessarily worked against predominant conceptions of who a leader could be within their respective countries and cultures. Further, intergenerational learning and transformative leadership for sustainable futures necessitate taking seriously the contributions of young people, including children, as these potential agents of change are often excluded from leadership processes.

**Leadership and complexity**

While it remains important to attend to the social and cultural dimensions of leadership, other theorists look to the physical sciences in order to complicate our understanding of this concept. In her article, ‘Sustainability leadership: co-creating a sustainable future,’ Mary A. Ferdig (2007) writes that, ‘Sustainability leadership reflects an emerging consciousness among people who are choosing to live their lives and lead their organizations in ways that account for their impact on the Earth, society, and the health of local and global economies’ (p. 26). In addition to defining sustainability leadership, which we take here as analogous to what we have termed ‘transformative leadership,’ Ferdig also begins to develop a new way of thinking about leadership in our present moment; in doing so, she challenges the *doxa* – or commonly held beliefs – about leadership in general:

If we look closely at the language in leadership literature (including models that advocate open communication, collaborative decision-making, servant leadership, organizational learning and so on) and the language and practice of respected leaders, we notice that they tend to reflect assumptions that a responsible ‘leader’ fulfills a designated role, either assigned or acknowledged, and in that role stands apart from, often metaphorically ‘above,’ the people and situations he or she is leading. From this position of assumed ‘objectivity,’ a responsible leader observes and makes sense of complex circumstances, determines the best course(s) of action, and uses his or her positional or attributed power to ‘manage,’ ‘unleash,’ ‘inspire,’ ‘influence,’ or otherwise ‘direct’ the behavior of others toward an outcome presumed to be most beneficial for everyone involved. (p. 26-27)
Ferdig associates this tendency with ‘a deeply held view about how the world works based on the mechanistic models of Newtonian science’ (Ferdig 2007, p. 27). While this view of leadership arguably informs how we understand – and even celebrate – the work and lives of cherished leaders throughout history, fostering transformative leadership for sustainability requires we consider alternative models of leadership that center less on the activity and/or example of a single charismatic figure.

In order to disrupt our ideas about who can serve as a leader, Ferdig draws on insights from complexity science, which ‘reveals a radically different worldview that challenges Newtonian assumptions of empirical truth, reductionism, stability, certainty, predictability, and control’ (ibid, p. 27). In this other framework for understanding leadership, change processes within socio-ecological systems cannot be said to reside within or emerge from leaders or powerful institutions. Instead, complexity-oriented theories of leadership challenge traditional models of leadership. In complexity-oriented theories, leadership emerges as a property of a complex system with many dynamically interacting components, both human and non-human. In a simple system, the behavior and evolution of the system can be determined from its components and initial conditions – as in the case of the simple system of a mechanical lever. In such a system, a change in one component can be easily correlated with a corresponding change in another component. Indeed, the familiar idea of a charismatic leader ‘leveraging’ his or her political influence fits squarely within the Newtonian framework of understanding leadership that Ferdig describes.

By contrast, the behaviors of complex systems cannot be deduced from their components or initial conditions, nor can we easily chart how changes in a complex system will manifest themselves as the system evolves over time. In complex systems, constellations of agents interact with one another to produce emergent behaviors and properties that cannot be reduced to the system’s components. Further, complex systems are dynamic (constantly changing), adaptive (responsive to change within and without), and self-organizing (emergent).8 Thus, understanding leadership as an emergent property of a complex system goes beyond an anthropocentric understanding of leadership, and instead puts the focus on the environment in which leadership takes place and from which it emerges.

8 For additional resources on transformative leadership, see Shields (2003, 2004, 2009); for environmental and sustainability leadership, see Portugal and Yukl (1994), Fullan (2005), Parkin (2010), and Visser and Courtice (2011); for complexity-leadership theories, see Uhl-Bien et al. (2007); for complexity and systems theories, specifically, see Meadows and Wright (2008) and Taylor (2002); for complexity theories as applied to educational theory and practice, see Doll et al. (2005) and Davis and Sumara (2006).
While we must be careful here to avoid assigning disproportionate emphasis or priority to scientific ways of understanding leadership, complexity theories can help us extend the capacity for leadership ‘to anyone who seeks sustainable change regardless of role or position. Leaders who adopt this expanded view can engage others using different assumptions about how people interact to create meaningful change’ (ibid, p. 27). This understanding of the world invites us to imagine leadership as emerging from an ensemble of interacting elements, both human and non-human – no single agent within this system can be neatly described as the ‘leader’.

Accordingly, there are few if any limits on who can serve as a leader for sustainability – including where such leadership can occur or at what scale. This is particularly vital in light of this volume’s concern with intergenerationality and the relationship between generations. This complexity-oriented view of leadership further assumes that, in Ferdig’s words:

- anyone can choose to become ‘a leader’ and take responsibility for fostering sustainable conditions in workplaces, communities, and even on a global scale;
- the role of a leader includes capabilities beyond those we currently attribute to leaders, primarily, learning what it means to be a leader ‘with’ others instead of a leader ‘of’ or ‘over’ others;
- a leader cannot effectively operate outside of the holistic interactions that exist among and between people and natural systems. (p. 27)

Finally, some of Ferdig’s remarks about the qualities of sustainability leaders are relevant to learning and education:

Rather than providing all of the answers, sustainability leaders create opportunities for people to come together and generate their own answers – ‘to explore, learn, and devise a realistic course of action to address sustainability challenges. Instead of giving direction, sustainability leaders develop and implement actions in collaboration with others, modifying them as needed to adapt to unforeseen changes in the environment over time. This approach to leadership does not assume an ability to control activity with any degree of certainty and predictability. (ibid, p. 31-32)

This has profound implications for how environmental education and education for sustainable development attempt to create or engender favorable conditions.

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for transformative leadership for sustainable futures. Such leadership cannot be
expected to reside within a lone, heroic individual; even celebrated leaders rely
on the advice, support, goodwill, consent, support, and even leadership of others,
i.e., their achievements must be understood ecologically. Intervening within the
subjectivity of students or those to be educated is only one way of interfacing
with a socio-ecological system; in fact, because transformative leadership is an
emergent property of a complex system, interacting with the non-human actors
within the system might also create favorable conditions for such leadership,
such as institutional structures, living spaces, education or communication
technologies, and food systems. Ecological instability caused by climate change
poses new challenges for this effort, as the complex systems into which we must
intervene in our efforts to engender transformational leadership for sustainable
futures are changing at an accelerating rate (Wals and Corcoran 2012).

**Intergenerational learning and transformative leadership
for sustainable futures**

In the last years of her life, Wangari Maathai worked to create a new kind of
higher education ‘that offers experiential learning and training, working directly
with communities, and providing a deliberate link between knowledge-holding
institutions and knowledge users at the community level’ (Maathai, 2010, p. 3).
She envisioned that the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental
Studies would ‘cultivate [a] culture of peace by shaping values, ethics, and attitudes
of its graduates through experiential learning, mentoring, and transformation
leadership’ (ibid, p. 8).

In the last years of his life, Nelson Mandela began ‘The Elders,’ an international
group of global leaders who work together for peace and human rights. The
Elders are self-described peace makers, peace builders, and social revolutionaries,
including Gro Harlem Brundtland, Graça Machel, Mary Robinson, Desmond
Tutu, Jimmy Carter, and Kofi Anan. A central component of their work is the
Elders+Youngers program, which seeks, in their words, to:

empower young people and promote intergenerational dialogue
across different areas of The Elders’ work. We are eager to share our
experiences with the younger generation, but we also recognise that
we have much to learn from them, and must create the space for them
to share their aspirations and ideas.\(^{10}\)

\(^{10}\)See http://theelders.org/about.
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The work of Maathai, Mandela, and the Elders—collectively and individually in their own lives and legacies—informed the way we view the intersection of intergenerational learning and transformative leadership. What is transformative leadership ‘for’ if it is not leadership for all, including all generations? And what is learning if it does not learn across the generations? This book is a first attempt to draw together these themes in the context of environmental education and education for sustainable development. It was a careful choice to open the book with Chapter 1 on the legacy of Nelson Mandela and the lessons of his life in relation to education for sustainable development; Heila Lotz-Sisitka is herself a leader in the field of environmental education, and the subject of her essay, Nelson Mandela, has meant so much to so many as a leader for democracy, freedom, and social justice. So, too, did we selectively conclude the book with Chapter 30 on a student-led social justice project, a chapter co-authored with student voices that points one possible way forward through intergenerational solidarity.

We are reminded of a popular African proverb: ‘If you want to walk faster, walk alone. If you want to walk further, walk with others.’ So may we walk together across generations, geographies, and genders. Indeed, we are counting on you, readers, to walk with us.

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